

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A pain in the anal appendages—Phoretic or parasitic mites are commonly found on invertebrates of all types, usually attached to the membranes of the leg joints or between the body sections, but I was bemused to find this fly (Fig. 1) with a heavy mite load attached to the very tip of its abdomen. The fly was kindly identified by Peter Chandler as a female of the muscid *Potamia littoralis* (R.-D.) (formerly *Dendrophaonia querceti* Bouché). This species is often found on tree trunks, but its predatory larvae are recorded from various habitats including bird and hornet nests and dung. The fly probably picked up the mites while at rest, most likely soon after emergence from its pupa as it dried out. Mites are often disregarded as of minor inconvenience to the insects on which they hitch a ride, even if they are sipping haemolymph, but one wonders whether, on this occasion, the whole mechanics of mating and egg laying would be interfered with by the presence of what is virtually a living chastity belt!—RICHARD A. JONES, 135 Friern Road, East Dulwich, London SE22 0AZ.



Fig. 1. *Potamia littoralis* with attached mites.